

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'No battle waged by revolutionaries ends with what you once did'
— PAGES 8-10

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 79/NO. 12 APRIL 6, 2015

'Militant' to launch sales campaign, fighting fund

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Members of the Socialist Workers Party and other *Militant* readers, who join in getting the paper into the hands of workers, fighters against police brutality and many more participating in labor and social resistance, are gearing up for a Spring 2015 *Militant* subscription drive.

The *Militant* is also preparing to launch the 2015 *Militant* Fighting Fund to raise money to help meet the paper's operating budget. The fund will run concurrently with the drive

HELP WIN NEW READERS

to expand the *Militant's* circulation.

In preparation, distributors of the *Militant* across the U.S. and around the world are stepping up efforts to take the paper to those involved in labor and social protests and door-to-door sales in a broad spectrum of working-class areas.

Militant supporters in Miami regularly sell the paper to members of the International Longshoremen's Association at their hiring hall on Saturday mornings, reports Anthony Dutrow.

Rodney Brown, a longtime member of ILA Local 1416, stopped by to ask

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Oil workers still on strike at 3 holdout companies

Bosses, union settle at Shell, Tesoro



Militant/Anne Parker

Members of USW Local 7-1 rally outside BP office in downtown Chicago March 19. Bosses at BP, Marathon, LyondellBasell refuse to sign national agreement, demand concessions.

BY ANNE PARKER

CHICAGO — Chanting “We want a contract now,” some 200 striking oil refinery workers, members of United Steelworkers Local 7-1, got off buses that brought them from Whiting, Indiana, and marched to the BP offices here March 19. The local has been on strike against BP since Feb. 8.

Workers at BP in Whiting and BP/Husky in Toledo, Ohio; at Marathon in Galveston Bay, Texas, and Catlettsburg, Kentucky; and at LyondellBasell in Houston are still on strike.

Bosses at these refineries are refusing to approve the March 12 national industry-pattern agreement worked out between the Steelworkers and Shell, and are demanding concessions in local agreements.

Steelworkers at Shell refineries in Texas and Tesoro refineries in California and Anacortes, Washington, have approved both the national and

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Socialist candidate in Chicago builds solidarity for oil strikers



Militant/Linda Avers

Dan Fein, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Chicago, right, discusses importance of oil strike with Michael Garcia outside his home in Whiting, Indiana, a few blocks from BP refinery.

BY ILONA GERSH

CHICAGO — Dan Fein, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Chicago, joined oil workers on strike against BP, demonstrating at the company's national headquarters here March 19.

The April 7 election is a runoff be-

tween incumbent Rahm Emanuel and Jesus Garcia, both Democratic Party candidates. Neither they nor any of the other candidates were able to win 50 percent of the vote Feb. 24.

Fein has used his campaign to build support for the national oil workers'

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Israel vote marks political openings for workers, Arabs

BY SETH GALINSKY

A strong vote for the Likud Party in the March 17 Israeli elections ensures the next government will continue to be led by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The results reflect concerns of working people there that U.S. President Barack Obama's foreign policy makes the threat of attacks from Iran and the reactionary Islamist Hamas forces that rule Gaza more likely.

The election does not mark a turn to the “hard right” by Netanyahu, as shrill cries from Obama administration spokespeople, the *New York Times* editorial board and other liberal news media in the U.S. and Israel claim. Nor do they lessen the possibility of recognition of a Palestinian state. To the contrary, it is Washington's course that increases the danger of instability and conflict in the region.

Negating a statement he made just before the elections, Netanyahu reiterated his stance March 19 in favor of a “demilitarized” Palestinian state alongside Israel.

Netanyahu called the election after his coalition split over a bill he backed

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Cuba, Latin American gov'ts condemn US attacks on Venezuela

BY MAGGIE TROWE

“ALBA brings us together today to reaffirm our firmest support for the Bolivarian people and government, in the face of the latest intervention-

ist measures and threats from the U.S. government against Venezuela,” Cuban President Raúl Castro said at a March 17 emergency meeting of the ALBA group in Caracas.

Representatives of the ALBA member states demanded Washington retract President Barack Obama's March 9 executive order declaring Venezuela a “threat to the national security and foreign policy of the Unit-

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1,000 protest cop assault on Black student at U of Virginia

BY MAGGIE TROWE

Some 1,000 University of Virginia students and others marched through downtown Charlottesville, Virginia, March 18 to protest the early morning beating and arrest of third-year African-American student Martese Johnson by state Alcohol Beverage Control police.

Johnson, 20, who hails from south Chicago, was refused entry into the Trinity Irish Pub during St. Patrick's Day festivities for a discrepancy between the zip code on his ID and the one he gave the bouncer. ABC cops then threw him to the ground, slam-

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—On the picket line, p. 5—

Rail and dockworkers join iron miners strike in Mauritania

Space Needle workers rally for wage increase in Seattle

Mexican farmworkers strike for better wages, conditions

BY SETH GALINSKY

At the height of the berry season, thousands of farmworkers in the San Quintín Valley in the Mexican state of Baja California went on strike March 17 to demand higher wages and better work conditions.

“We are paid starvation wages and we’re not going to take it anymore,” Fidel Sánchez, a spokesperson for the Alliance of National, State and Municipal Organizations for Social Justice, which is leading the strike, told the *Militant* by phone March 20 from the community of Vicente Guerrero.

There are at least 30,000 farmworkers in the valley. This is the first strike there in decades.

“About 80 percent of us are from the original peoples of Mexico. We come from Guerrero, Chiapas, Oaxaca, Puebla, Michoacán and San Luís Potosí,” said Sánchez, a farmworker for 32 years. “We speak Mixtec and Nahuatl along with Spanish. Half the workers are women.”

The valley, 200 miles south of San Diego, is one of Mexico’s largest sources of agricultural exports, including berries and tomatoes. While prices have risen, farmworkers haven’t received a pay raise in years, Sánchez said.

Workers are paid piece rate, most earning on average between \$6.50 and \$8.30 a day. “The young people can make more than that,” Sánchez said, “but you have to work at triple speed. Many of us are over 40, and that’s not possible. It’s modern day slavery.”

Twelve companies are on strike. Only one in the valley is Mexican-owned, he

said. The rest belong to U.S., Japanese, Chinese, Arab and Chilean capitalists.

The farm owners have contracts with three government-allied unions — the Confederation of Mexican Workers, the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers and Peasants of Mexico, and the Regional Workers Confederation. “The contracts were signed behind the backs of the workers,” Sánchez said. The Alliance was formed a year and a half ago by workers who wanted to fight. Sánchez said it is growing rapidly.

“We are demanding these agreements be revoked,” Sánchez said. “We demand a minimum wage of 300 pesos a day,” about \$19.50, and higher piece rates.

Other demands include overtime pay and six weeks paid maternity leave before and after a worker has a child.

“We are demanding an end to sexual harassment of women workers by the



Striking farmworkers rally in mid-March in town of Vicente Guerrero, in Baja California.

supervisors,” Sánchez said. The Alliance is also demanding farmworkers be covered by the country’s National Social Security Institute, making them eligible for government-funded medical care.

On the first day of the strike hundreds of workers blocked highways throughout the region. They were attacked the next day by police using rubber bullets

and tear gas. More than 230 farmworkers were arrested. The Alliance protested their arrests, and most were released.

“This is very fertile land, everything grows here,” Sánchez said. “Our strike is having an impact on the companies, on the bosses, the state. They will see how important the work we do is for the life of the country.”

US tours demand truth about 43 ‘disappeared’ in Mexico

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Caravans across the United States are building solidarity with the fight in Mexico to force the government there to tell the truth about 43 students who were “disappeared” last year. The students from the Ayotzinapa rural teachers college were attacked by municipal police in Iguala on Sept. 26, 2014. Three were killed in the initial attacks and 43 taken captive and presumed killed. Hundreds of thousands have joined protests across Mexico since the assault.

Parents of some of the disappeared students and supporters of their fight will visit more than 40 U.S. cities. Feli-

pe de la Cruz Sandoval, a teacher whose son survived the attack, visited New York March 18-22 to participate in an Amnesty International meeting, a press conference, campus forum and rally of 200 at Union Square. “Wherever you find a Mexican there’s a candle of protest that is burning,” he said at a cultural event at St. Peter’s Church March 19. Workers of Mexican origin have been the backbone of protests across the U.S.

Hundreds of people attended several events in Houston to hear Anayeli Guerrero de la Cruz, whose brother Jhoshivani is one of the disappeared, and Clemente Rodríguez Moreno, father of Christian Alfonso Rodríguez Telumbre, who was also disappeared. “The [Mexican] federal government is guilty because they’ve done nothing. To them the case is closed. We want them to reopen it because we have no solution yet,” Rodríguez said at a March 18 rally of 100 outside the Mexican Consulate.

“The police protect the criminals and drug traffickers,” Guerrero said at a March 20 meeting at the Communications Workers of America union hall.

Some 2,000 people marched to the



Militant/Naomi Craine

Felipe de la Cruz, whose son survived police attack in Mexico, in New York March 22.

Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles March 22. Three legs of the caravan are crisscrossing the country, and will converge in New York in mid-April. For more information visit www.caravana43.com.

Danielle London in Houston contributed to this article.

THE MILITANT

Support workers’ fight for \$15 and union

Fast-food workers are among many around the country fighting for higher pay, safer conditions and a union. The ‘Militant’ covers and builds solidarity with their fight, including the next round of protests April 15, explaining why it strengthens all working people.

Militant/Maggie Trowe
McDonald’s workers rally in New York March 17 protesting unsafe job conditions.

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Oil workers strike continues

Continued from front page
local contracts and are beginning to return to work.

The first national oil strike in more than 30 years began Feb. 1, spreading to 15 refineries and petrochemical plants in seven states. Strikers are fighting for safety on the job, less forced overtime, the end of contracting out daily maintenance and keeping the “retrogression clause” guaranteeing continuation of gains won in past contracts. The fight shifted to union locals after the tentative national agreement.

“We are here today to let BP know that the members are solid,” Bob Loft, USW staff person, told the *Militant*. “We have had no movement since Feb. 8. We are still negotiating. BP wants to take away our rights in the contract so that we will be unable to bargain over changes in policies that the company wants to implement.”

Alec Holmes, 20, one of about 400 contract workers employed by Veolia Environmental Services at the Whiting refinery, proudly held a USW banner at the protest. “My father has worked at BP for 26 years,” Holmes told the *Militant*. “Out of respect for the USW, I will not cross the picket line.”

“The company calls me at 6 a.m. every morning to say that if I don’t cross the picket line, I’ll lose my job,” he continued. “A week after the strike began, they called me to go in and help clean up a leak. I said, ‘No way. I’m not going to cross the line.’ This strike is about safety, and it’s going to help everybody who works in the refinery, including contractors, and the community too.”

“I saw a notice about the rally on the

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers website and decided to come to show support,” said Sandra Verri, a laid-off union electrician at BP. “We need to put BP in their place.”

Local 7-1 is organizing another march through Whiting to the refinery March 27.

“There are three big steel mills in Northwest Indiana that have contracts coming up,” Dave Bevil, a striking BP operator, told the *Militant*. “We’re setting a precedent. If BP busts us, the steel mills will try to bust them.”

At the Tesoro refinery in Carson, California, members of Steelworkers Local 675 voted to approve the contract March 22 and began to return to work.

“The company messed up because this strike brought solidarity between the operations and maintenance department workers,” Jason LaBella, a pipe fitter and member of Local 675, told the *Militant*. “We have been able to discuss all the lies the company has used to drive a wedge between us. The strike also helped the younger generation see how the union works. We will go back 100-fold stronger.”

Some 200 Steelworkers from the Tesoro refinery in Martinez, California, and from nearby Chevron and Shell refineries, rallied at Tesoro in support of Criff Reyes, an alkylolation plant operator and picket captain framed up and fired by Tesoro.

Workers will be voting on the contract this week.

Some 100 union members and community supporters rallied March 21 outside the Tesoro refinery in Anacortes, Washington. Two days later the

NY meeting kicks off tour against naval base in SKorea



NEW YORK — Paco Michelson, left, and Hee Eun Park spoke at a March 22 event here, part of a national tour to win support for the fight against the construction of a South Korean naval and submarine base in Gangjeong village on Jeju Island. The base, on the southern tip of South Korea, will be used by the U.S. military.

“The vast majority of the 2,000 villagers oppose the construction and started protesting as soon as they learned about the plans in 2007,” Michelson said. “The protests have been met with heavy repression from the state. Over the years 220,000 police have passed through, more than 700 island residents and supporters have been arrested and fines amount to hundreds of thousands of dollars.”

The fight has become a rallying point against Washington’s decades-long record of trampling on Korean sovereignty and the rights of workers and farmers on the island. Park and Michelson are veterans of the protests. Their 11-city U.S. tour titled “If You Don’t Give Up, You Can’t Lose” kicked off in Boston March 17 and ends in Portland, Oregon, April 20. The tour features the film “Gureombi — The Wind Is Blowing,” documenting the fight.

“We speak about our experiences from the protests and also raise funds to help pay the fines and continue the fight,” Korean-born Park said to the *Militant*. “It has been a long, hard struggle and the solidarity from within and outside Korea is very important.”

— EMMA JOHNSON

unionists approved the contract.

“We wouldn’t have got what we did without the strike,” Gordon Zurn, recording secretary for Steelworkers Local 12-591, told the *Militant* in a phone interview March 25. “The solidarity

we got from other unions and the community was important in helping us get what we did.”

Marathon Petroleum has rejected the “no retrogression” clause in the national agreement and is proposing major concessions in local agreements.

More than 200 striking members of Steelworkers Local 13-1 and supporters marched from the union hall to the Marathon refinery in Texas City, Texas, March 23 to a candlelight vigil marking the 10th anniversary of the massive explosion at the refinery, owned by BP at the time. Striker Bill Rowe read the names of 35 workers killed at the refinery since 1980.

“We are fighting today to make sure something like this can never happen again,” Rev. James Daniels said.

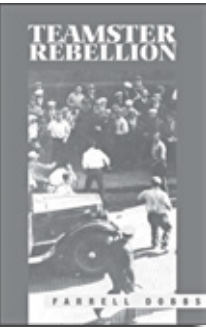
“To these companies, everyone is disposable,” Nancy Clay, whose husband works at Marathon, told the *Militant*.

The same day at the main gate of the Marathon refinery in Catlettsburg, Kentucky, more than 100 striking members of Steelworkers Local 8-719 held a similar vigil, Dave Martin, vice president of the local, told the *Militant*. The event commemorated not only the workers killed in Texas in 2005, but also those killed on the job at the Catlettsburg refinery. “Four members of our local spoke at the vigil,” Martin said, “and we drove five crosses in the ground for the local members who have been killed in explosions and accidents here.”

“The members are pretty involved with the strike,” Martin said. “We feel like we need to stand strong. None of the support we have been getting from other unions and the community has slowed down.”

John Naubert in Anacortes, Washington; Betsey Stone in Martinez, California; Ilona Gersh in Chicago; and Bob Samson in Texas City, Texas, contributed to this article.

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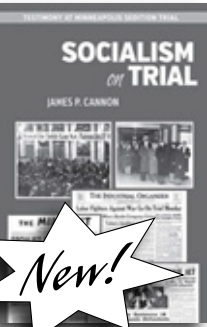


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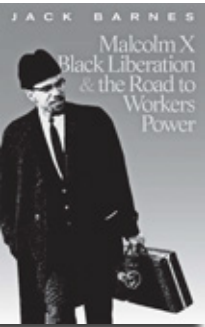
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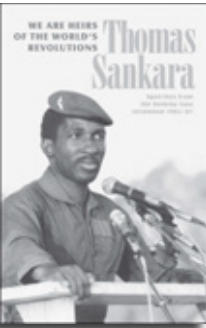


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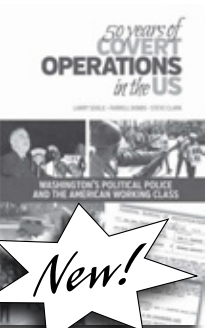
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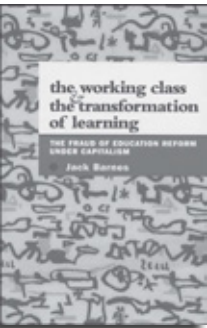
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Cuba: US hands off Venezuela

Continued from front page ed States,” and establish dialog with Venezuela.

ALBA, which means “dawn” in Spanish and stands for the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America, was initiated by Venezuela and Cuba in 2004 as an alternative to the U.S.-led Free Trade Area of the Americas. Its members are Antigua and Barbuda, Bolivia, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, Grenada, Nicaragua, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Venezuela.

“Today Venezuela is not alone, nor is our region the same as it was 20 years ago,” Castro said. “We will not tolerate the violation of sovereignty or allow peace in the region to be broken with impunity.”

“The United States must understand once and for all that it is impossible to seduce or buy Cuba, or intimidate Venezuela,” he said. “Our unity is indestructible.”

“We have come to close ranks with Venezuela and ALBA, and reaffirm that principles are not negotiable,” Castro said.

Amid rising tensions over U.S. threats and sanctions against Venezuela, the latest meeting between representatives of the U.S. and Cuban governments ended abruptly March 16 in Havana after one day of negotiations.

This was the third round of high-level talks since Dec. 17, when Obama and Castro announced the two countries would begin talks to resume diplomatic relations.

While Washington’s relentless campaign to overthrow the Cuban Revolution has caused harm to the Cuban people, it has also led to the “complete

isolation of the United States” in Latin America, Castro told the meeting. This led Obama to shift course, he said, but “the objectives persist and only the methods change.”

Economic crisis in Venezuela

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, who succeeded Hugo Chávez after the latter’s death in 2013, continues many of his predecessor’s policies. Chávez was elected in 1998 after more than a decade of rising popular protests. He launched numerous public subsidies and social programs while maintaining capitalist property relations. Chávez and the majority of his followers have rejected the example of the Cuban Revolution of mobilizing the toilers to overthrow capitalist rule and instead push for a new kind of “21st Century Socialism.”

Chávez worked closely with the Cuban government on many fronts, including the launching of ALBA, which sponsors programs to combat illiteracy, expand access to health care, improve food production and develop energy and infrastructure.

Venezuela initiated PetroCaribe, providing Cuba and 13 other Caribbean countries with substantial amounts of oil at prices well below the world market.

“PetroCaribe was an extraordinary, generous and humanistic contribution,” Castro said at the meeting. “Now they want to destroy PetroCaribe to threaten its member states, make them submit to the oil multinationals and separate them from Venezuela.”

The 60 percent drop in oil prices in less than a year has exacerbated an economic crisis in Venezuela, which depends on oil sales for 95 percent of

Pussy Riot speaks on cop brutality in US, Ukraine war



Militant/Chris Hoepfner

PHILADELPHIA — Some 700 students and workers attended a meeting at the University of Pennsylvania here March 17 to hear Maria Alyokhina (right) and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, members of Pussy Riot imprisoned in Russia in 2012 for nearly two years for performing songs protesting the regime of Vladimir Putin. They showed two of their videos, “Punk Prayer,” for which they were incarcerated, and “I Can’t Breathe,” inspired by protests against the killing of Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York, by cop Daniel Pantaleo in 2014.

“We came to New York to produce music against the war in the Ukraine but found ourselves among protesters against the killing of Eric Garner,” Alyokhina said. “Police violence exists in both countries.”

Law enforcement believes they cannot be touched, but they should be touched, the Pussy Riot members explained.

They encouraged people in the audience to get involved. The only thing you can do is speak out loud, as loud as you can, they said.

In response to a worker from Walmart who described their fight for \$15 and a union, Tolokonnikova said that in prison she worked sewing police uniforms and joined a hunger strike fighting to cut the workday to eight hours.

— CHRIS HOEPPNER

Solidarity mission to Venezuela counters US threats

The World Federation of Democratic Youth sent a solidarity mission of nearly 50 delegates from 25 countries to Caracas Feb. 20-28 to stand with Venezuela in face of Washington’s economic sanctions and other hostile moves.

Delegates came from across the Americas, including Cuba and the U.S., as well as from Europe, Africa and the Middle East. They were hosted by the Young Communists of Venezuela with support from the Youth of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela, the youth organization of the party of President Nicolás Maduro and former President Hugo Chávez, who died in 2013. The delegation included members from several university student federations that are part of the Continental Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Students.

Delegates took part in an anti-imperialist forum and visited a session of the National Assembly and a community center in a working-class neighborhood of Caracas. They heard presentations on programs of the Venezuelan government, including the PetroCaribe project, which supplies petroleum at well below capitalist market prices to Cuba and other Caribbean countries.

Shortly after the delegation’s visit, WFDY issued a response to Barack Obama’s March 9 statement that Venezuela is a security threat to the United States. The WFDY statement called on the “progressive and anti-imperialist youth of this world” to condemn Washington’s action, which “will only provoke a war,” it said.

Jacob Perasso, a delegate from the U.S. Young Socialists, told the *Militant* that the YS took part in the trip “because we wanted to make clear we stand with Venezuela against imperialist threats.”

“Even in the short time I was there,” he said, “it was clear to me that the accelerating economic crisis — steep inflation, shortages of food and other goods working people need — are products of the workings of capitalist property and social relations, which still predominate there.”

Perasso spoke at several events and was interviewed by newspapers and radio and TV stations. “I said we have a common enemy, U.S. imperialism, that wants to close space for workers and farmers in Venezuela and seeks a government that will do its bidding, including cutting off economic and social ties with the socialist revolution in Cuba.

“At the same time, Washington is waging a war on working people in the U.S. I pointed to the strike by oil workers, who are standing up for safety, and mobilizations against police brutality across the U.S.”

“I said that the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party are working to build a revolutionary movement in the U.S. to overturn capitalist rule and establish a workers and farmers government, as working people in Cuba did some 55 years ago,” Perasso said. “That’s the task of workers around the world.”

— MAGGIE TROWE

its hard-currency income. Runaway inflation and shortages of food and basic necessities are making life difficult for working people.

With the economic crisis deepening and support for Maduro and his party slipping, Washington seeks to isolate and demonize the government and help Venezuela’s opposition parties win elections expected at the end of the year. The *New York Times* editors March 12 urged the administration to take measures to “further isolate a leader who is becoming a regional pariah.”

On its part, the Venezuelan government, which accused the U.S. of being behind a coup plot Feb. 12, carried out military exercises March 14 involving nearly 100,000 troops, saying they were preparing for the possibility of a U.S. invasion. The next day the National Assembly gave Maduro powers to enact laws without congressional authorization for the rest of the year.

‘If You Don’t Give Up, You Can’t Lose’ Oppose Jeju Island, SKorea, naval base

Hear: Hee Eun Park and Paco Michelson

See film: ‘Gureombi: The Wind Is Blowing’

U.S. tour schedule:

Philadelphia, March 26-28
Washington, D.C., March 28-30
Los Angeles and San Diego, March 30-April 4
San Francisco Bay Area, April 4-9
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Portland, Oregon, April 12-20

For more information visit:
www.savejejunow.org

At the invitation of Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela, Cuba will attend the April 10-11 Summit of the Americas in Panama City organized by the U.S.-dominated Organization of American States. This is the first time Cuba will attend an OAS summit since Washington engineered Cuba’s expulsion from the organization in 1962.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

NEW YORK

New York

The Netanyahu Victory in Israel and the Fight for Political Space for Toilers in the Middle East. Fri., March 27. Dinner, 6:45 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m.

U.S. Hands Off Venezuela! No to Sanctions! Speaker: Jacob Perasso, Socialist Workers Party, participated in recent international solidarity mission to Venezuela. Fri., April 3, 7:30 p.m. *Both events at Ripley Grier Studios, 939 8th Ave., Studio 2A. Tel.: (646) 434-8117.*

CANADA

Calgary

Bill C-51: Preparing for Coming Social Battles, Ottawa Chips Away at Democratic Rights. Speaker: Michel Dugré, Communist League. Sat., March 28, 4 p.m. *4909 17th Ave. SW. Tel.: (403) 457-9044.*

UNITED KINGDOM

London

Communist League Election Campaign: Workers Need to Take Political Power. Only Way to End Grind on Living Standards, Rights and Capitalism’s Dog-Eat-Dog Values. Speaker: Jonathan Silberman, Communist League candidate in May 7 general election for Hackney North and Stoke Newington. Celebrate opening of new campaign headquarters. Donation: £3. Thurs., April 2, 7 p.m. *2nd Floor, 83 Kingsland High Street, E8 2PB. Tel.: (07521) 364496.*

—ON THE PICKET LINE—

MAGGIE TROWE, EDITOR

Help make this column a voice of workers' resistance!

If you are involved in a labor struggle or have information on one, please contact me at (212) 244-4899 or themilitant@mac.com

—Maggie Trowe

Rail and dockworkers join iron miners strike in Mauritania

Some 3,800 of the 4,000 workers at the National Industrial and Mining Company (SNIM) iron mines in Zouérate, a town in the West African country of Mauritania, have been on strike since Jan. 30. They were later joined by other miners, railroad workers and dockworkers in the port town of Nouadhibou. In retaliation SNIM has fired 304 strikers.

Following a two-day walkout in May 2014, SNIM signed an agreement with the unions to substantially raise wages starting in October. But the company now claims that a nearly 50 percent drop in the price of iron ore has made it impossible to honor the agreement.

"We went on strike when it became clear that the company would not negotiate with our representatives," a union leader told the press.

Dockworkers and railroad workers, who also work for SNIM, the country's largest employer after the government, have joined the strike. As a result, the train that takes iron ore to the port on the country's only rail line isn't running and no ships have been loaded with ore since March 6, a union representative said.

The General Confederation of Mauritanian Workers (CGTM) is the main union in the mines, but the strike has the support of a committee that includes the country's other union confederations.

The government, which owns a 70 percent stake in SNIM, is putting pressure on workers to go back to work. Income from the mines provides more than 15 percent of government revenues and one-third of the country's total production.

With all ore exports blocked, government representatives March 13 verbally proposed an agreement that included rehiring all workers fired during the strike, the payment of workers' wages during the 45 days on strike and a special bonus of one month's wages. SNIM representatives have said that they were

not part of the negotiations. Union representatives rejected the government's verbal proposal, insisting that any agreement be in writing and signed by SNIM management.

—Nat London

Space Needle workers rally for wage increase in Seattle

SEATTLE — Nearly 100 members and supporters of UNITE HERE Local 8, which includes elevator operators and servers, gathered at the Space Needle here March 18 holding placards reading "1,000 days without a raise."

Space Needle bosses announced they would be hiring 200 workers for the tourist season and paying some of them from \$15 to \$25 an hour, more than veteran full-time workers make.

Workers told KIRO-TV that bosses gave them "live-on-less" webinars, suggesting they cook meals instead of going

\$15 and a union!
Join fast-food workers protests April 15!

For more info on actions across the U.S. visit:
april15.org



Striking union iron ore miners and their families rally in Zouérate, Mauritania, March 5. Several thousand miners went on strike against SNIM Jan. 30 when the company renege on promised wage increase. Rail and port workers have joined the strikers.

out and attend museums on free admission days. This inspired another placard that read, "I can't 'live on less.'"

Julia Dube was a server at the Sky-City Restaurant at the top of the Space Needle. "I worked there two and a half years and then was fired for union activity," she told the *Militant*. The National Labor Relations Board ruled that she should be rehired and paid back wages, Dube said. "The Space Needle owners are appealing the decision, so I don't have my job back yet."

Abby Lawlor, a Local 8 researcher, said the union contract expired in 2011, and after a year the bosses terminated it.

"At this point all we are trying to get is a wage increase for the workers," she said.

Members of Service Employees International Union, American Federation of Government Employees, Teamsters and other unions attended the rally. The workers, along with two Seattle City Council members, went into corporate offices with a petition demanding a wage increase. They came out with a proposal from the company that a wage raise would be given if union activity was ended. Workers ripped up the company proposal and chanted "We'll be back! We'll be back!"

—Edward Foote

'Militant' to launch drive to expand circulation

Continued from front page

about Israeli President Benjamin Netanyahu's recent speech to Congress. Dutrow showed him the *Militant* article on the talk and pointed to coverage on the nationwide strike of United Steelworkers-organized oil refinery workers.

"I'll be right back to get a subscription," Brown said, returning to the union hall to get his job assignment.

"I had to stop by your table today," Brown said when he returned to fill out a subscription blank. "What you have deals with unions around the world, not just in this country."

"This fight for the \$15 an hour minimum wage and a union is the fight of the whole labor movement, union and

nonunion," he added. "We are one movement."

Dutrow and Chuck Guerra later knocked on doors in a the working-class suburb of Opa-Locka and sold two more subscriptions.

Two members of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 19 in Seattle picked up subscriptions outside their hiring hall March 21.

At a meeting the following day of a workers assembly of El Comité, a Latino rights organization in Seattle that is helping to build a May Day march there, three workers bought *Militant* subscriptions.

Participants in the Railroad Workers United-sponsored conference on "The

Future of Railroads: Safety, Workers, Community and the Environment" in Olympia, Washington, March 21 also expressed interest in the paper's coverage and eight bought subscriptions. One was a rail worker and member of SMART, and another a dockworker, member of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 4 in Vancouver, Washington.

Participants also bought 10 Pathfinder books, including *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary; *Mother Jones Speaks*; and *New International* no. 14, which includes "The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class."

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



April 6, 1990

Wrapped in the mantle of the new Soviet presidency, Mikhail Gorbachev has sharply escalated his confrontation with the popular independence movement in Lithuania, attempting to force it to retreat from its March 11 political break with the Soviet Union. It is the first republic ever to use its right guaranteed by the Soviet constitution to secede from the Soviet Union.

Orders, ultimatums, threats, and provocations have come streaming at the Lithuanian government from the Kremlin. Soviet troops have crisscrossed Vilnius, the capital. Lithuanian youth who have refused to serve in the Soviet army have been rounded up. Moscow has now said that it will draft several thousand Lithuanian youth into the army. The Lithuanian government says its citizens are not subject to Moscow's military conscription.



April 5, 1965

NEW YORK — Two demonstrations here protested the police department's whitewash of Detective John C. Devlin, who beat and shot Gregorio Cruz, a 22-year-old Puerto Rican, last September.

Devlin claimed that he had stopped young Cruz for questioning as a possible homicide suspect and that Cruz slugged him and ran away. Devlin, who weighs 210 pounds, claimed that, after he had again caught the 140-pound youth, the latter nearly knocked him unconscious, forcing Devlin to shoot him three times.

Cruz, who police admit had no connection with the crime allegedly being investigated, charges that Devlin, without identifying himself as a police officer, accosted him in the dark in front of the Alfred E. Smith Housing Project.



April 6, 1940

Over a hundred delegates and alternates are making their way to the special national convention of the Socialist Workers Party this week.

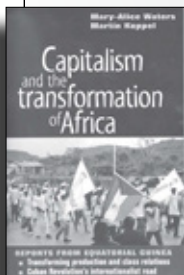
Coming by automobile, by rail, by ship, by thumb, comrades from the Golden Gate all the way to New England and from Oregon down to Texas are converging on New York for the opening of the convention on April 5.

Among those representing branches of the party are automobile workers from Michigan, sailors and longshoremen from the West Coast and the Gulf, teamsters from the Mid-West area, steel workers from Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, cannery workers from California and W.P.A. militants from everywhere.

The convention will take a definitive stand on the question of the attitude to take towards the Soviet Union in the unfolding world war.

Capitalism and the Transformation of Africa

by Mary-Alice Waters and Martín Koppel



"In the decades of wars, economic crises, and explosive class battles ahead, the weight of the toilers in Africa in shaping the future will be

greater than ever before."
—MARY-ALICE WATERS \$10

pathfinderpress.com

Kurds battle Islamic State, Iran expands role in Iraq

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Since their victory driving Islamic State forces from Kobani, Syria, two months ago, Kurdish forces have been expanding the fight, forging alliances with Arab, Christian and other groups in battling both the reactionary IS and the dictatorial rule of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

In Iraq, Washington is in a tacit alliance with Iran, backing Tehran's increased military involvement there. Iran, one of Assad's key allies, is leading a drive to retake the city of Tikrit from Islamic State. Meanwhile, leading U.S. government officials now say they see a place for Assad in Syria.

In villages in Hasakah province in northeastern Syria, the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) are helping organize armed civilian defense forces to counter Islamic State attacks. YPG commander Dilshad told *Haaretz* newspaper the aim is to create an armed and trained civilian population ready to stop Islamic State advances.

"People may not think we, normal people, can protect this area — but we can and we will," Moodie Ashlie, an ethnic Armenian, told the paper.

In late February, Islamic State captured a dozen Assyrian Christian villages in Syria, setting homes ablaze, blowing up several churches, razing historic sites and abducting more than 250 people, including women and children. Since then, YPG fighters and members of the Christian Syriac Military Council have been making gains in recapturing some of these villages.

The civil war in Syria is now in its fifth year. It began with mass popular protests demanding an end to Assad's

rule. Opposition forces took control of Aleppo, Syria's largest city, and much of the country. Backed by Moscow and Tehran, Assad's forces have far superior weaponry. His regime has dealt blows to the rebellion and devastated much of the population through starvation sieges and deadly barrel bombs.

More than 215,000 people have been killed since the civil war began. Almost half the country's population of 22 million has been forced to flee their homes — at least 3.7 million to other countries and 6.5 million internally displaced.

Wide swaths of Syria have no electricity, with 83 percent of all lights in the country cut off, according to satellite images. In Aleppo, 97 percent of the lights have gone out.

Government airstrikes March 15 against opposition forces in Doma city, northeast of Damascus, killed 18 people and wounded at least 100. The following evening, six members of one family were killed in northwestern Syria when a government plane dropped a bomb filled with chlorine gas on their home, reported the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Assad has often refrained from attacking Islamic State strongholds, allowing the Islamists to focus on fighting the Kurds and other opposition groups.

In an interview aired on CBS "Face the Nation" March 15, Secretary of State John Kerry called for negotiating with Assad, as part of seeking "a political solution." His remarks stirred protests from Paris and Ankara, governments that are part of the coalition against Islamic State.

If the Syrian regime collapsed, CIA Director John Brennan told the Council

Communist League opens campaign hall in Calgary



Militant/Bonita Murdoch

CALGARY, Alberta — Katherine LeRougetel, speaking, Communist League candidate in the upcoming provincial election from Calgary East, launched her campaign and joined in celebrating the opening of the new Communist League campaign hall here March 15. Volunteers from Montreal and Vancouver joined a weekend work party to get the hall ready.

Rally chair Philippe Tessier, a leader of the Communist League in Montreal, explained the CL decided eight months ago to expand into two branches in Montreal and Calgary. "This headquarters marks a big new step," he said.

LeRougetel extended solidarity to rail workers fighting for safety and against efforts by the bosses to cut the crew size down to just one. She called for workers to join in defense efforts for engineer Tom Harding, facing frame-up charges in the July 2013 explosion that killed 47 people in Lac-Mégantic, Quebec, when an unoccupied 72-car oil train rolled down a hill and derailed.

She welcomed the victory won in Alberta allowing high school students to form Gay Straight Alliance clubs, over initial opposition from the Conservative Party government. "This is an advance for the unity of all working people," she said. Paul Mailhot, right, brought greetings from the Socialist Workers Party in the U.S.

— JOE YOUNG

on Foreign Relations March 13, "The last thing we want to do is to allow them [Islamic State] to march into Damascus."

U.S., Iran have common interests

In early March Baghdad launched an offensive to retake the city of Tikrit

from Islamic State. Spearheading the drive are Iranian-trained and equipped Shia militias, many of which have a history of sectarian violence against Sunni residents in these areas. Last January, for example, 72 Sunnis were shot dead in northeastern Baquba province, massacred by Shia militias, reported Al-Jazeera.

In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee March 11, Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, pointed to Iranian involvement in Iraq and the Pentagon's openness to its military implications in fighting Islamic State. Dempsey said the offensive involves about 20,000 Shia militia forces, 3,000 Iraqi troops and some 1,000 Sunni tribal fighters.

"The activity of the Iranians and their support for the Iraqi Security Forces is a positive thing in military terms against ISIL [Islamic State]," Dempsey said.

Iranian military advisers led by Gen. Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Revolutionary Guard's Quds Force, are on the ground leading this effort, reported The Associated Press. Soleimani has also organized Iranian and Hezbollah forces fighting for Assad in Syria.

After surrounding Tikrit and entering parts of it, the drive has stalled as Islamic State forces holed up in the city have inflicted heavy casualties on Tehran-backed forces.

Islamic State, led militarily by a number of officers from the former regime of Saddam Hussein, rapidly seized control of one-third of Iraqi territory last June, as the Iraqi army disintegrated. Since then it has been pushed back from some 20 percent of what it took — most in the north by Kurdish Peshmerga troops.

Washington and its imperialist allies in Europe staunchly oppose formation of an independent Kurdish state and refuse to provide Kurdish fighters with needed heavy weapons.

Chicago socialist candidate backs oil strikers

Continued from front page

fight to defend safety on the job and strengthen their union. "Workers all across the country have a stake in your strike," Fein told strikers he talked to at the rally.

"I graduated from high school in Junction City, Kansas, which is a farming community," Al Reid, a metals mechanic at BP, told Fein. "I used to bale hay and clear fields for neighbors. Farmers face the same corporate plight as the regular working man. The government is just big business."

"What we need is a labor party that can fight for the interests of workers and their allies, including farmers," Fein said. "The bosses and the Democratic and Republican parties that represent them are enemies of both farmers and workers. We need our own revolutionary working-class party to chart a course toward taking power and establishing a workers and farmers government. We need to run the country, not the capitalist class."

Fein and campaign supporters also knocked on doors in a working-class neighborhood in Whiting, Indiana, just blocks from the BP refinery.

"I was at my neighbor's barbecue last summer," Michael Garcia told Fein, "when a compressor exploded at BP. It shook the ground."

"A man in my building used to work at the BP plant," Garcia said. "Day after day he left to be at work at 5 a.m. and got off at 5 p.m. There's not time for much

else." Long days and massive amount of overtime, and the toll they take on workers, are a central issue in the strike.

Margarita Vega, a graphic designer and mother of three, was excited to learn about the SWP campaign. "Look at what the Cuban socialist revolution did," Fein told her. "They not only got rid of the Batista dictatorship, but the workers took over the factories and the peasants got the land they worked. Rents were lowered to 10 percent of their income."

"Even if you buy a house," Vega said, "It's really not yours. If you can't afford the taxes it's taken away. I know many people who face this."

To learn more about socialism, Vega got a subscription to the *Militant* and a copy of *Absolved by Solidarity*, about the Cuban Revolution.

"I think that the government should be in the hands of the working class. The government is a dictatorship of capital where the two capitalist parties, the Democrats and Republicans, take turns maintaining the system that exploits working people," Fein told Raynard Williams, 18, who was waiting for a bus at 95th and State Street, a public transit center on the majority-Black South Side of Chicago March 21. Williams had just gotten off work at Kentucky Fried Chicken.

"The capitalist system is based on keeping profits high and wages low," Fein said. "That's why the fight of fast-food and Walmart workers for higher wages is so important."

Rail workers, community members discuss safety

BY EDGAR FOOTE
AND JACK PARKER

OLYMPIA, Washington — Rail and oil workers and other unionists, environmentalists and others discussed and debated “The Future of Railroads: Safety, Workers, Community, and Environment” at two West Coast conferences in March. The conferences were called to discuss how to protect workers and the general public from the deadly effects of the bosses’ profit drive, including their campaign to further slash train crews.

Around 110 people attended the March 14 conference in Richmond, California, a center of rail yards and refineries, and some 95 people came together at Evergreen State College here March 21. The conferences were sponsored by Railroad Workers United and the Backbone Campaign.

Railroad Workers United includes union workers from different railroads who joined in the successful fight against the imposition of one-person crews by BNSF Railway last summer.

Backbone Campaign, a group based on Vashon Island in the Puget Sound near Seattle, supports “shifting the economics of rail transport away from heavy fossil fuel commodities.”

Environmental groups, including members of Sunflower Alliance, Sierra Club and 350 Bay Area, came to the conference in Richmond. Members of Land Owners and Citizens for a Safe Community in Longview and Rising Tide joined the Washington gathering.

RWU initiated the conferences last summer after a growing number of oil train derailments, explosions and fires became a concern across North America. Before the Richmond event Ron Ka-

minkow, general secretary of the RWU, told the *Militant* that everyone can agree that oil trains, and any trains, need to move safely and securely.

Fight against one-person crew

At the Olympia conference, he recounted how rail workers overwhelmingly voted down the BNSF proposal for one-person crews last fall. Mike Elliott, the legislative spokesperson for the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen in Washington state, spoke about how striking refinery workers, organized by the United Steelworkers, were fighting for safety on the job and in surrounding communities, and how railroad engineers were refusing to take oil trains into struck facilities.

“Twenty-five rail workers and 10 refinery workers from Chevron and Tesoro participated in the Richmond conference,” Gifford Hartman, conference organizer, told the *Militant* March 20. “About a third of the participants were workers on front lines talking to environmentalists and others about issues that are of common concern.”

“The conference brought diverse groups of people together,” J.P. Wright, co-chair of Railroad Workers United and an engineer in Louisville, Kentucky, said in a report he posted on YouTube. “When the oil refinery workers talked about the community coming behind them it was inspiring. RWU received a little bit of criticism working with environmentalists. We were able to educate them about our core issues.

“We know a train traveling behind us at 50 miles per hour does not need to come off the rail. When environmentalists heard about incredible fatigue

no peace! No racist police!” as they marched to the African-American Affairs Office across the campus. Johnson participated in the action.

“These incidents are not isolated,” Aryn Frazier from the Black Student Alliance told the *Post*. “Not in Charlottesville, not in New York and not across the nation.”

Where to find distributors of the *Militant*, *New International*, and a full display of Pathfinder books.

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August protest in Alliance, Neb., part of fight that defeated BNSF demand for one-person crew.

schedules, how much the jobs had been cut, the inadequate amount of people to inspect the trains, the poorly maintained track and equipment — we won their support.”

“Whenever there is an accident, the railroad companies spend millions on public relations campaigns to come up with new safety slogans rather than addressing the safety issues,” Herb Krohn, a former legislative representative for United Transportation Union Local 1348, now part of SMART, told the Washington conference.

Abby Brockworth of Rising Tide in Seattle said she would be going to trial on charges from her participation in protests against oil trains traveling through populated areas in Everett, Washington.

Unionists fight for safety

“I have worked in logging, construction and the refineries. None of these jobs were safe,” said Steve Garey, president of Steelworkers Local 12-591, on strike against Tesoro in Anacortes, Washington. “Being a union member has given me a chance to make meaningful changes to protect workers safety.”

He said that in 17 years 14 people had died at Tesoro, seven in a 2010 explosion. “The explosion was avoidable, but the company did not take the measures necessary to prevent it from happening. With regards to the hazardous materials that we work with and that are transported by rail, I care as much about the community that can be affected as I do about my union brothers and sisters,” Garey said.

“The biggest thing I am learning

about is how unsafe the trains are,” Guy Berliner told the *Militant*. He works with 15 NOW in Portland, Oregon, fighting for higher wages for fast-food workers. “We need these rail workers to speak out everywhere.”

Justin Hirsch of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 19 in Seattle attended the conference with a half dozen other area longshoremen. “The conference was positive and it was great to see constructive dialogue between labor and the environmentalists, where each side worked hard to see each others’ positions,” he said.

“When the companies say ‘safety’ they mean blame us,” RWU leader Kaminkow told the Olympia conference. “When we say safety, we mean get rid of the hazards. We have to build alliances in the community and we have to replicate these conferences in other cities across the country and in the Midwest.”

A celebration of the life
and political contributions of

Becky Ellis

(1948-2015)

*Longtime member of the
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*45 years building
the communist movement*

Saturday, March 28, Minneapolis

Reception 5:30 p.m., Program 6 p.m.

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Univ. of Virginia cop assault

Continued from front page

ming his head on the pavement, and held him down as Johnson repeatedly told them he was a student at the university and called them racists. Johnson suffered head and face cuts requiring 10 stitches. The cops arrested him for obstruction of justice and public intoxication.

Johnson is a member of the university’s Honor Committee and leadership development chairman of the Black Student Alliance.

“This is not something that ever should have happened,” University of Virginia President Teresa Sullivan told the media as she joined the protest.

Sullivan told the *Washington Post* that she had asked the ABC cops to probe area bars believed to be selling alcohol to minors, but the agents had targeted students instead.

The bouncer, Kevin Badke, one of the bar’s owners, said Johnson was “polite and cordial,” though disappointed, when he was refused entry to the bar.

Badke said he didn’t believe Johnson was drunk, and a Breathalyzer test later confirmed he was not intoxicated.

The day after the protest, Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe called for an investigation of the beating.

About 100 angry Black students walked out of a meeting with local police chiefs and the state secretary of public safety and homeland security March 20.

Students chanted, “No justice,

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‘No battle waged by revolutionaries ends with what you once did’

Cuban Five tell students in Havana: ‘The more selfless you are, the happier, freer men and women you will be’

The five Cuban revolutionaries who spent years in Washington’s prisons for their actions in defense of the Cuban Revolution have been speaking to audiences across the island almost daily since Dec. 17. On that day, three of them — Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, and Antonio Guerrero — returned home to a hero’s welcome after more than 16 years behind bars. They joined Fernando González and René González, who had been released earlier after serving their entire sentences.

One of the many events they have taken part in was a Feb. 19 meeting at Havana’s main engineering and science university, known as CUJAE. There Tony, René, and Fernando held a lively exchange with 300 youth and professors.

The meeting, which took place during the Havana International Book Fair, was a presentation of *Absolved by Solidarity*, published by U.S.-based Pathfinder Press. The book reproduces a set of 16 watercolors that Guerrero painted last year while still in the federal prison in Marianna, Florida. The paintings depict Washington’s political frame-up trial against them, in which they received prison sentences of up to a double life term without parole.

Also on the speakers platform were Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *Absolved by Solidarity*; CUJAE rector Alicia Alonso; and professor Julián Gutiérrez, who organized the meeting — the culmination of years of regular monthly campus events campaigning to win the release of the Cuban Five.

Guerrero spoke after Waters described the book and how it is being used in the United States and around the world. Then he and his two comrades-in-arms answered questions. The lively exchange lasted two hours. The March 9 *Militant* published an article on the event

along with Waters’ presentation.

Below are excerpts of the remarks by Tony, René, and Fernando.



From opening remarks by Antonio Guerrero

It’s an honor to be here and to see the youth, the professors, the workers. During the question and answer period it will be Fernando and René’s turn to speak.

First, we want to thank the compañeros from Pathfinder, who day in and day out, under conditions you can’t even imagine, are defending socialism within the United States. We had the honor to get to know these compañeros during our years in prison, from the time our situation became known in 2001 and we were able to communicate.

For us Cubans it’s easy to conclude that socialism is the only road possible to make this a better world. Only in a society with a different kind of mentality — like the one we’ve built here with so much sacrifice — can we expect the world to survive the conditions we’re living through, as Fidel has alerted us more than once. In the United States it’s difficult to raise consciousness about this. It’s easier here in Cuba because of our history, because of the revolution and the greatness of this endeavor, which of course isn’t perfect. We have many things to learn, to correct, to change — but to change within our own conditions, within our own ideals.

When I met these compañeros in person a few days ago, it felt like I had known them for many years. They supported us from the very beginning. They kept sending us magazines, books, and newspapers, in both English and Spanish. This helped us establish many



Militant photos, left/Ron Poulsen, right/Martin Koppel
“Every day you have to think about the duty we face, and the future of the revolution,” Antonio Guerrero told participants, above, at CUJAE university in Havana Feb. 19. “The less selfish you are, the happier you will be.” Platform at meeting, from left, Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *Absolved by Solidarity*; CUJAE rector Alicia Alonso; professor Julián Gutiérrez; and three of Cuban Five: René González, Antonio Guerrero, and Fernando González.

relations with people inside the prisons. We began to win the admiration of other prisoners because of the support we were receiving from the outside. We passed around the books they sent us, and other prisoners would say, “This is very interesting.”

Thanks to the education we received in our country, we were able to sit down and have frank discussions with anyone about any subject. Often I would be asked, “What’s communism, what’s socialism?” That’s easy for us to explain. But we also had an important weapon — these books. They also sent us a newspaper called the *Militant* that is published in both languages. Other prisoners would get interested in reading it too.

We began to do some projects together with these compañeros. They were interested in portraying the human side of the Five, as an important way to condemn the injustice against us. One of the biggest projects we worked on was the previous book with 15 watercolors....

These compañeros — there’s not a lot of them, they’re unassuming, but they’re bold in how they use their resources. They took exhibits of the watercolors to places you wouldn’t imagine. And so we received letters from students, youth, children from across the United States. I remember that when the *Militant* arrived every week, it would publish the list of exhibits. It said: “I Will Die the Way I’ve Lived” will be shown in this city, this city, that city. The next week it said: now it will be shown here, here, and there.

From New Zealand, high school students sent me wonderful letters and photos. That too was the result of their work.

These exhibits of the watercolors about the “hole” became a very effective weapon. The graphic images attract you, they stay in your mind. And there was an explanation underneath each image.

So after they did an exhibit in Miami, I decided to paint a new set of watercolors. Time was short. Presenting the subject of the trial was more complex. But by Sept. 12, 2014, they already had in

their hands each of the 16 watercolors, “Absolved by Solidarity.” They were exhibited in Washington, D.C.

The compañeros from Pathfinder wrote me a letter and sent me a mock-up for a new book with these watercolors. They had planned to publish it by Jan. 1. It was already announced in the *Militant* newspaper. And then, suddenly on Dec. 17, the three of us were back here.

We had been here for a little more than two months, and we were in one event after another — I didn’t even have time to ask myself what had happened with the book of watercolors. Then a few weeks ago, a compañero from the foreign ministry calls and tells me, “I have something for you that was brought by our U.N. ambassador. It was sent by the compañeros of Pathfinder.” It was this book.

Well, I don’t know how to describe how moved I was. During that brief period of time they had updated the book. You can see its quality, with photos of our return and items written by my brothers. All of it sheds light on the meaning of the title, which is *Absolved by Solidarity* — the solidarity, the victory won thanks to the jury of millions.

The battle doesn’t end here. No battle waged by revolutionaries ends with something you once did. What you did is in the past. Are you going to live off

what you did? No, you have to live from what you do each day.

Every day you have to think about the tasks, the duty we face. About your future — the future of the revolution. Your future is not just about studying and taking exams and telling people, “Look, here’s my engineering diploma.” It’s about what that diploma represents. It’s about what you have today.

When I was a student like you, I always used to say, “I studied in the Soviet Union.” I would say, “Everything I have I owe to the revolution.” And I think I’ve never been wrong about thinking that way.

Times have changed. Some people in our country have started to think first and foremost about themselves. I’m not talking about you, but rather in a general sense. Selfishness has begun to reappear. I’ll just tell you one thing. The less selfish you are, the happier you will be. And you will be better revolutionaries, better men and women. [Applause]

From question-and-answer period

QUESTION: Could you explain how by being less selfish we’ll be happier?

TONY: When we speak of selfishness, the first person I think of is Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. I think of people who could have had everything and gave it up — even their lives — for something

more valuable than material things. This is something you have to internalize. When they arrested us, I thought a lot about [Cuban national hero José] Martí and about Che [Guevara]. Everyone knows Martí could have been whatever he wanted. Che too — he was a doctor, right? So you begin to nourish yourself on these things.

The only way to be prepared

Why were we happy while we were in prison? Well, every morning when you get up, it’s a critical moment in your life, a new opportunity. But sometimes it’s more than critical — it’s a moment when you define who you are. The more you try to take the right path each time you get up, the more you stand on your own two feet with clear ideas, the more likely it is that when the decisive moment comes you’ll be prepared.

The only way to be prepared is to have internalized this freedom, these examples, this selflessness. It has to go beyond slogans or something you’ve read. It’s something inside you. And it allows you at night to rest your head on

your pillow and sleep with a tremendous peace of mind.

Let’s take, for example, the situation in which we found ourselves when we were arrested in 1998. They put some guy in front of you asking you to admit to something you didn’t do. He tells you that if you go over to his side, you can get back all the material things you had, you’ll go back to your normal life.

The alternative is that things are going to get real tough. The guy tells you, “Look, we’re going to give you such a long sentence that you’re going to die in prison.”

So you have to be prepared for this. You have to have already developed within you an understanding of what you will do at any given moment. Once you passed that test and said no, you begin to realize you’re happier than those around you. People see you and say, “Damn! Why are you laughing all the time? Why are you so happy?”

Some of the prisoners had sold drugs and had money to own the latest car models and other things. They suffered because they missed those things. Some had sentences of five or 10 years — less than us — and they couldn’t endure it. When they were released, they went back to doing the same things over again, a vicious circle. But you have a choice.

Today you might have all those material things, like that nice overcoat. But perhaps tomorrow you won’t have it anymore.

When the Special Period began, Fidel told women here something we won’t forget. He said, “Take care of that nice dress you have now, because it might have to last for a number of years.” That’s what he told people, right?

And there were some who said, “No, I’m going north, I’m going to look for new clothes any way I can.” In exchange for what?

FERNANDO: I’m going to dare to say a few words on this subject. I agree with what Tony said. We human beings evolved out of the animal kingdom and have within us the instinct to fight for subsistence. But we separated from the

rest of the animal kingdom. We’re conscious animals, even though the instinct to be selfish remains in us.

Human society has evolved through various economic systems. Capitalism, which today is predominant, is a system that fosters selfishness in all of us.

Socialism, on the other hand, will prevail to the degree it’s able to create a different culture, including the capacity to dedicate yourself to something greater than you as an individual. With all due respect to individuality, the most important thing, as José Martí, said, is to do something for society, for humanity.

We faced a choice

RENÉ: We faced some critical moments, such as the morning of Sept. 12, 1998. Each of us had developed our own way of living. We had our loved ones. We had living conditions that in fact were better than here in Cuba, because we were working in a country that is in the heart of the imperialist world. We each had a car and a house we supposedly owned — although we knew all that was a fallacy. History showed that later, when Olguita lost the house after my arrest. But it’s true we had a comfortable life.

Suddenly, on the morning of Sept. 12 we had to make a choice, as Antonio said. We knew that in one blow they could strip us of everything we possessed. We could have taken the other road. We knew we had to decide whether we’d betray Cuba and do whatever the prosecutor and the FBI wanted.

We chose not to betray Cuba. And from the moment they took us to the Federal Detention Center in Miami, we began to understand we would have to give up everything we had taken for granted up to that moment. All the material goods that you accumulate over years of work — the clothes, your car, the little house you fixed up.

Then came the fight to survive as human beings. The first thing they went after was our dignity — and they did so with all the force they had. Along with our happiness, as we were discussing earlier.

But gradually you realize it’s possible to defend your happiness even under those conditions. That becomes part of your resistance to the blackmail, arrogance, and abuses by the prosecutors.

During the trial there were people who were even more unhappy than us prisoners — the prosecutors. We made the prosecutors the unhappiest of all the people we saw during those seven months.

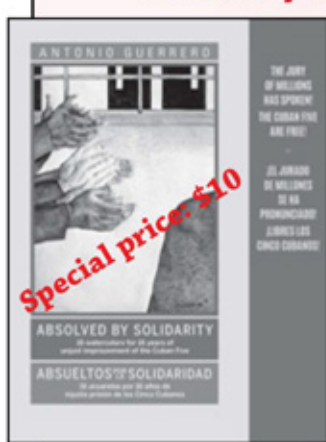
When they came to court the prosecutors were the butt of jokes by everyone, even the people in whose custody we were. They were objects of ridicule by the translator; the stenographer, Richard, who became our friend, Elizabeth, the judge’s secretary; and others.

For us every day of the trial, which began when we got up at 4:30 a.m., was such a pleasure that when we went to sleep every night, we couldn’t wait to demoralize them more the next day.

The prosecutors had everything. They would get up, I imagine, at 6:30 or 7 a.m. They ate whatever they wanted

Continued on page 10

Books for working-class fighters ...



Absolved by Solidarity
16 Watercolors for 16 Years of
Unjust Imprisonment
by Antonio Guerrero
Spanish/English edition

Cuba and Angola
Fighting for Africa’s Freedom and Our Own
\$12 Also in Spanish

Voices From Prison
\$7 Also in French, Arabic,
Farsi and Spanish

**Women in Cuba: The Making of a
Revolution Within the Revolution**
by Vilma Espín, Asela de los Santos, Yolanda Ferrer
\$20 Also in Spanish



**Is Socialist Revolution in the
U.S. Possible?**
by Mary-Alice Waters
\$7 Also in Spanish, French, Farsi, Swedish

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution
by Jack Barnes
\$10 Also in Spanish, French and Farsi

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During their frame-up trial and incarceration in the United States the five Cuban revolutionaries used humor as a form of resistance. Gerardo Hernández’s cartoons, like the one above, even circulated among court staff, René González noted. Caption in Spanish says, “JUDGE: Good morning, counsel, please introduce yourselves. PROSECUTOR: Good morning, Madam Judge. Caroline Heck-Miller, representing Mr. Basulto, Alpha-66, Comandos F-4, and any other well-intentioned terrorist in Miami,” a reference to paramilitary groups the Five had monitored to prevent attacks on Cuba.

‘Freer men and women’

Continued from page 9

for breakfast. They drove to court in those 16-cylinder cars of theirs that guzzle half the fuel that CUJAE uses. They put on whatever clothes they wanted — the poor prosecutor had incredibly bad taste, but, well, that was her choice. [Laughter]

They were the most miserable-looking people you ever saw. When I publish my “diary” of the trial with Gerardo’s cartoons, you’ll see what I mean. Those cartoons by Gerardo circulated among the guards who escorted us, among the stenographers, among others who worked in the court.

The point is, you can learn to fight for your own happiness. Happiness is inside ourselves. The further away you seek it, the less you will find it. [Applause]

QUESTION: Where did you get the strength to create art and the other things you did in prison: Antonio’s paintings, Gerardo’s cartoons, all the letters you sent replying to thousands of people around the world?

QUESTION: Other leaders who spent time in prison have played a historic role, like Nelson Mandela and Fidel. We’re counting on you today and in the future as leaders.

QUESTION: What are some of the lessons you learned from your time in the United States?

TONY: To answer the question about how we got the strength to create art in prison. Martí said we must be cultured to be free, we must be educated to be free. When we speak of culture today, we’re speaking of what the revolution brought to our people. How much illiteracy was there in Cuba before the revolution? How many universities were there? Who could even think we would have something like CUJAE if there hadn’t been a revolution?

I was talking with a *compañero* on the way here, asking about the physical state of the school. I like the hallways, so nice and clean, with all the plants. But I know there are problems here, as there are throughout the country, above all due to the economic battle we’ve been waging since 1990. It’s been very difficult.

And I said to him, Look, the capitalists solve it one way. In the United States they say, “I’ll charge you \$30,000 in tuition so you can enroll here. But since you don’t have that money, you’ll have to get a loan from the bank.” They pocket that money, and yes, you’ll have good air conditioning and other things in those universities. That’s their system.

Who gave us what we have here in Cuba? The revolution — the workers,

those who cut cane, those who work. We have something different, and you have to understand this before you start complaining or making critical comments about it. Try to go deeper, don’t just stay on the surface. Get to the root of things.

When I spoke at the Lenin high school here, I told students their number one responsibility was to take care of the school and try to make it more attractive, not to criticize everything all the time. To think about how they came to have it, where it came from.

Getting back to the question of what gave us the strength to create art while in prison. It’s rooted in the culture our people gave us, the education we received, free of charge, from the time we were children.

We are product of the revolution

Anyone can write a poem. But to spend 17 months in the hole and 16 years in prison and not create paintings that contain a shred of hatred or bitterness, but rather optimism, love, and freedom — that’s different. That’s a product of the way we were educated as revolutionaries. It’s something we were able to achieve thanks to the revolution. When you find yourself behind bars, all that education and preparation helps you create.

FERNANDO: For us creativity was a form of freedom. Remember, none of us are professional artists. It came from the ability to resist, as Tony did with his paintings and his poems. As Gerardo did with his cartoons. As Ramón did with his poetry and René with his writings. Everyone in his own way. That spirit of resistance was rooted in the culture that Tony explained.

TONY: A *compañero* here spoke about our place in history. My friend, let’s not start telling a lot of stories about historical roles. Just think about Che: did he do that? It’s not about what someone did. It’s about what you will do. Everyone is important here. Don’t let anyone come here trying to be the indispensable one, the hero of the movie, OK?

That’s how we see it. We even made a pact among the five of us, a commitment among brothers, that if tomorrow we see one of us with a swelled head — which won’t happen — we’ll tell him, “Listen, you don’t seem like the person I knew.” We would discuss it, because that’s what you do among *compañeros*.

My point is, the tasks ahead are for everyone, not just of three or four people. The ones to blame for putting us in the spotlight are those who put us in jail. That’s where the great struggle and solidarity came from.

Everything that happened is not about us as individuals — it’s the Cuban people, who we represent. The standing we gained represents the resistance of our people. OK, it was us who this happened to. But it could just as well have happened to other *compañeros* we had over there.

We’re going to work together

And that’s over. Now people are going to ask: So, when are you going to start working? What are your responsibilities? Are you working well?

We’re not going to be coming back here 37 more times to talk about the same things. My job can’t be to come here every day and give you a *teque*.² Right now



The future, Fernando González said, lies not in dog-eat-dog values of capitalism but in “dedicating yourself to something greater than you as an individual ... to do something for society, for humanity.” Above, Cuban volunteers arrive in Sierra Leone in October to fight Ebola.

I have responsibilities to shoulder, and so do René and Fernando. We’re going to work like everyone else, and work together. [Applause]

On the question about lessons I learned in the U.S. After I was arrested, the FBI went looking for people who would testify against me. They couldn’t get a single person from Key West, where I lived. They went to see people at my job. They tried to pressure my companion Maggie — they made her go to the FBI office endless times. They searched and searched but found no one.

Just the opposite. I had a list of about 20 people I knew, and some of them testified in my favor. There were people who wrote to me from the first day. A woman in Key West, the one who gave me my first job, sent me a postcard every week.

When I was returning to Cuba I told them [U.S. officials], “You’re taking away my U.S. citizenship because Obama made that a condition for my release. But you can’t take away the affection toward the American people that I developed.” Like Martí, I could say that I got to know the monster because I lived inside its belly. But it’s not the *people* of the United States who are the monster.

RENÉ: If I learned something in the United States, it’s that all human beings have much more in common than what keeps us apart. U.S. society has completely different foundations from ours; its history has its consequences, just like ours has. But when you get to know someone there, person to person,

2 *Teque* is a popular Cuban term for revolutionary-sounding rhetoric rendered meaningless and mind-numbing by rote repetition.

the differences tend to dissolve. What separates us is this apparatus, refined over thousands of years as a class necessity. It pits us against each other, whether by raising the banners of religion, race, or political divisions.

I don’t know whether the role that we’re going to play in Cuba will be a historic one. Those things are for history to decide. As Antonio said so well, our history is now in the past. We are five Cubans like any of you. We will take a place in the trenches. And, like all of you, we will be judged by the work we do.

Under today’s conditions, dangers are going to arise and we have to be vigilant. They will try to corrupt us and buy us off. They will try to take advantage of the problems we have. They will come in through the cracks they can open among us. They will try to create a class in Cuba — the class that fortunately we were able to kick out in 1959. They’re going to try to create it here again. They’re already talking about starting to encourage certain sectors of the Cuban economy and society with that in mind.

That means there will be work to do, and all of us will have to join in. I would say victory will be shaped more by you than by us. You are the ones who are starting your life’s work under these new circumstances.

We will join in the work posed by these circumstances to the best of our ability. All we can aspire to is that, through our work, we will be able to live up to the standing that this episode has given us in your eyes.

As for history, I’ll be happy if, when I die, my daughters are proud of me. And if any of you say I did something well, then I will have surpassed my goal. [Applause]



Militant/Patrick Brown

Exhibits of Guerrero’s prison paintings showed “the human side of the Five as a way to condemn the injustice against us,” Tony said. After seeing exhibit, New Zealand high school students at August 2014 conference (above) sent him letters of support.



Militant/Martin Koppel

After meeting, students rushed to get *Absolved by Solidarity* and other books on revolutionary politics. In prison in the U.S., Guerrero noted, the Cuban Five circulated these books and the *Militant*. “They helped us establish many relations with other prisoners,” he said.

Class struggle road in Israel, Palestine

The March 17 election in Israel — contrary to the doomsayers — shows that the door is open for working people in Israel and the Palestinian territories to advance on a course toward less bloodshed and win more political space for the toilers there and throughout the region.

That’s the opposite of the view of liberals and leftists in the U.S. and Israel. It doesn’t fit their false schema that Jewish workers in Israel are a reactionary mass and Israel is different from any other nation on earth.

Netanyahu, in part because of his history and image, is more able to agree to concessions both to the just fight for a Palestinian homeland and to demands of the labor movement than his opponents. What can be achieved will depend on whether a Palestinian leadership emerges that can lead the toilers to fight along this course.

This opening was confirmed within days, when leaders of the Arab-based Joint List announced a march demanding legal recognition of 46 Bedouin Arab villages in southern Israel and Israeli President Reuven Rivlin agreed to meet with them.

Israel vote marks space for workers, Arabs

Continued from front page

that would give exclusive rights to Jewish citizens in Israel, a departure from Israel’s founding document that calls for “complete equality of social and political rights” irrespective of religion, even if often honored in the breach.

The election makes it less likely that Netanyahu will attempt to pass the reactionary bill.

While Netanyahu’s Likud Party won 30 seats, up from 18 in 2013, the total won by the so-called right wing is virtually the same as in the outgoing Knesset, Israel’s parliament. Likud grew primarily at the expense of its more extremist allies. The Jewish Home party, which backs expanding settlements in the West Bank, and Israel Is Our Home Party both lost seats.

An attempt to weaken Palestinian-based parties by raising the threshold of votes needed to be elected backfired. The parties formed an electoral alliance for the first time, the Joint List, spurring Israeli Arabs to vote in record numbers and increasing their seats from 11 to 14, the third largest bloc in the Knesset.

During a pre-election debate in Ibillin, Israel, Avigdor Lieberman, leader of Israel Is Our Home Party and Netanyahu’s foreign minister, asked Ayman Odeh, head of the predominantly Arab Joint List, “Why did you come to this studio, why not to Gaza, or Ramallah? Why are you even here?”

“I am part of the nature, the surroundings, the landscape,” replied Odeh, a member of the municipal council in Haifa, a mixed Arab-Jewish city.

Likud’s main opponent, the Zionist Union, composed of the Labor Party and Hatnuah, won 24 seats, three more than in 2013. The ultra-Orthodox parties lost 14 seats.

Netanyahu campaigned on the claim that he is the only one who can stand up to Iran. Obama and Netanyahu have clashed over Washington’s efforts to reach agreement with Tehran on easing imperialist sanctions in exchange for some limits on Iran’s nuclear program. Washington’s de facto alliance with Iran in the fight against Islamic State in Iraq and Syria is no secret.

Obama did everything he could to influence the election, hoping Likud would lose. V15, a group led by Jeremy Bird, national field director for Obama’s 2012 presidential campaign, spent millions to defeat Likud.

Obama didn’t call to congratulate Netanyahu until two days after the election, then chastised him for statements he made before the vote.

Washington says it is now considering what changes it will make in relations with Israel.

The Zionist Union agreed that the regime in Tehran is a threat to the existence of Israel and opposes permitting Iran to develop the ability to produce nuclear weapons. The union stated it supports “keeping the settlement blocs” in the West Bank, and maintaining Jerusalem as the “eternal capital of the state of Israel.”

The Zionist Union said it would “reignite the peace process,” though its leaders explained they saw no

Above all, what toilers in the Mideast need today is a working-class perspective and leadership. Israel — like every capitalist state worldwide — is divided into the propertied rulers on one side and workers on the other. The road forward lies in winning the most political space for our side — the working class and farmer allies — to fight and learn and to unite across national divisions.

This begins with the fight to stop the endless cycle of conflict and war. A Palestinian leadership must emerge that will counter Hamas’ reactionary course of continual military conflicts aimed at Israel’s destruction.

The existence of Israel — both as a Jewish and an increasingly multinational and secular capitalist state — is a fact. The workers movement and fighters for Palestinian national rights must start from this reality.

Similarly, we must fight to win recognition of Palestine today, however Balkanized by the Israeli rulers’ settlement policy. This will open the door for struggles to expand Palestine, winning a contiguous and functional Palestinian state.

authoritative force on the West Bank or in Gaza with whom they could negotiate.

View from the left

Virtually the entire U.S. and Israeli petty-bourgeois left holds the view that a Netanyahu victory proves working people in Israel are hopelessly reactionary. Some were dismayed, others overjoyed at the result.

Gideon Levy, a columnist for the liberal Israeli daily *Haaretz*, heaped scorn on working people, writing that the election showed “the nation must be replaced,” and called for “general elections to choose a new Israeli people — immediately.”

The *Times* published a column March 18 by Yousef Munayyer, executive director of the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, which supports the “Boycott, Divest and Sanction” campaign against Israel. “The biggest losers in this election were those who made the argument that change could come from within Israel,” Munayyer wrote. “It can’t and it won’t.”

He said he was glad, because if Netanyahu had lost, their boycott efforts would have been weakened.

Supporters of the boycott say it’s aimed at forcing Tel Aviv to end its control of the West Bank and its embargo of Gaza. But the campaign provides cover for Jew-hatred and calls to wipe Israel off the map.

Class struggle in Israel

The doomsayers and opponents of the existence of Israel are blind to the reality of the class struggle there.

About 20 percent of Israeli citizens today are Arabs; 10 percent are ultra-Orthodox Jews. There is a large immigrant worker component from Africa and Asia. In the midst of the worldwide capitalist economic crisis, working people there have gone on strike and joined protests together, demanding housing, a higher minimum wage and unions.

Recent developments in the labor movement inside Israel open up more possibilities for working-class unity. Some 2,500 child care workers — Arab, ultra-Orthodox Jews and secular Jews — held a one-day national strike Feb. 9.

Netanyahu has been widely criticized for a statement he released in the middle of the vote warning that Arabs were “being bused to the polling stations in droves” to spur his supporters to vote.

Netanyahu apologized in a March 23 meeting with Arab organizations. “I see myself as the prime minister of every one of you, of all Israeli citizens, without any difference of religion, race or gender,” he said

Proof that the election results will not stop actions for the rights of Arabs came quickly. Joint List head Ayman Odeh announced he will lead a four-day march beginning March 26 through Bedouin villages in the Negev to the residence of Israeli President Reuven Rivlin. They are calling for the government to recognize 46 villages and provide needed infrastructure and social services. Rivlin said he would meet with them.

Crimea: One year of Moscow’s occupation

BY NAOMI CRAINE

It has been a year since the Russian government annexed Crimea. During that time Moscow and local authorities have trampled on democratic rights, jailed and banned leaders of the Crimean Tatar people and sought to crush opposition. Working people there are also being squeezed by imperialist-imposed sanctions.

Russian President Vladimir Putin now openly says he began organizing to seize Crimea from the moment Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich was toppled by massive popular protests on Feb. 22, 2014. In a new TV documentary he praises the troops who seized the province. At the time, Putin denied that the fighters who poured into Crimea in unmarked uniforms, dubbed “little green men,” were Russian soldiers.

On Feb. 27, 2014, gunmen seized the Crimean parliament building. They oversaw the “election” of Sergei Aksyonov, whose Russian Unity party held just three of 100 seats in the parliament, as the new Crimean prime minister. A so-called referendum for Crimean independence was set for March 16.

There were protests in response by opponents of the Russian intervention, including 15,000 on March 8, International Women’s Day. But the referendum was pushed through with a mix of thuggery and propaganda claiming the new government in Kiev was made up of fascists who would take away rights of Russian-speakers. Crimean officials claimed the result was 96 percent in favor of joining the Russian Federation.

For centuries Crimea was the home of the Tatar people, among the many oppressed nations within the Russian czarist empire. Following the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, Tatar culture flourished in the early 1920s under the Bolshevik’s Crimeanization policy, led by V.I. Lenin. After the death of Lenin, a growing privileged layer in the government bureaucracy headed by Joseph Stalin consolidated control and carried out a counterrevolution against Lenin’s revolutionary policies and revived Great Russian chauvinism.

During World War II Stalin slandered the Tatar people as agents of Hitler, and forcibly deported the entire population to Uzbekistan, Siberia and the Urals. Nearly half of the Tatar people died in the process.

Beginning in the 1960s, Tatars began returning to Crimea. At the time of the Russian annexation last year, the population was about 12 percent Tatar, 25 percent Ukrainian and 58 percent ethnic Russian.

Tatars, supporters of Ukraine face repression

The vast majority of Tatars opposed the Russian takeover. In April 2014 Russian officials banned Mustafa Dzhemilev from Crimea. He was the former head of the Mejlis, the Crimean Tatar parliament, and leader of the Tatar people for decades. In July the current head of the Mejlis, Refat Chubarov, was also banned. And in January Akhtem Chiigoz, deputy head of the Mejlis, was arrested on accusations of organizing “mass disorder” for his involvement in protests on Feb. 26, 2014, in support of Ukrainian sovereignty.

Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, a native of Crimea, has been imprisoned in Russia since last May on trumped-up “terrorism” charges for opposing Moscow’s occupation. Three participants in a March 9 commemoration of the birthday of the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko were prosecuted simply for holding a Ukrainian flag and ribbons in the flag’s colors. Russian officials are refusing to renew the license of the one Crimean Tatar television station.

The occupation government is demanding residents get a Russian passport. “To retain Ukrainian citizenship you had to write quite a degrading letter of application,” Dzhemilev said in a March 3 interview with Euromaidan Press. “If you don’t get a Russian passport you don’t have the right to send your kids to school, you don’t have a right to undergo treatment at a public hospital, in short you barely have any rights.”

Sanctions by Washington and the European Union against Moscow have had a harsh effect on working people. In December Visa and Mastercard suspended credit and debit-card services to Crimea, citing U.S. sanctions. Tourism, the region’s largest industry, is down by one-third. Inflation is 38 percent, and even higher for food. Crimea depends on Ukraine for its water and electricity, and Kiev has reduced supplies of both, leading to blackouts and irrigation problems.